

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 0678 ACTION SECSTATE INFO LONDON JAN 15.

QUOTE: S E C R E T BONN 00678

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, US, GW

SUBJECT: MEETING OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS IN DENMARK -

JANUARY 18-19, 1976

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND

REF: STATE 008875

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1. I WAS ABLE TO SEE SPD CHAIRMAN BRANDT LATE YESTER-

DAY IN MUENSTER/EIFEL, WHERE HE IS HOLED UP BEFORE GOING TO COPENHAGEN, TO DELIVER YOUR LETTER PERSONALLY. AFTER HE HAD READ IT, I MADE THE ADDITIONAL POINTS CONTAINED IN THE REFTEL. HE ASKED ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER WHICH HE MUCH APPRECIATED AND TO WHICH HE WOULD RESPOND IN DUE COURSE. HE ADDED THAT THE SPIEGEL ARTICLE HAD BEEN A COMPLETE HODGEPODGE AND THAT THE ALLEGED QUOTATIONS FROM STATEMENTS MADE BY HIM WERE A FABRICATION.

2. HE THEN WENT ON TO COMMENT AT SOME LENGTH ON INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. STARTING WITH ITALY, HE NOTED THAT THE SPD HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY THE ACTION OF THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY. IT HAD BEEN ASSUMED THAT ANY SUCH ACTION WOULD ONLY COME AFTER THE PARTY CONGRESS. DE MARTINO HAD OBVIOUSLY FELT THAT THE SITUATION WAS BECOMING DESPERATE FOR THE SOCIALISTS, AND THAT ONLY THROUGH AN ABRUPT DENIAL OF CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT COULD THE TENDENCY OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNISTS TO WORK TOGETHER INFORMALLY BE ABORTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE (BRANDT) HAD TO ADMIT THAT THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS WERE HIGHLY DOGMATIC IN THEIR APPROACH TO PROBLEMS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC REFORM, SOMETIMES MORE SO THAN THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS WERE AT LEAST OSTENSIBLY. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE CITED THE RECENT CASE OF AN ITALIAN COMMUNIST CONTACT WITH THE GERMAN PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS EHRENBURG IN ORDER TO LEARN HOW A FREE MARKET ECONOMY REALLY FUNCTIONED. EHRENBURG'S COMMUNIST INTERLOCUTOR IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE COMMENTED THAT WHAT THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS SAID ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN ENTERPRISE WAS NONSENSE.

3. IN THE LONG RUN, BRANDT CONTINUED, HE COULD SEE AN EVOLUTION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY ALONG LINES SIMILAR TO THE PRE-WORLD-WAR-I EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN MARXIST SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WAYWARD TENDENCIES OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. FACED BY SUCH PROSPECTS, HE HAD NOTED THAT, IN SCANDINAVIA, THE SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO SPLIT COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS

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IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AMONG AT LEAST SEGMENTS OF NATIONAL PARTIES. THEY HAD DONE THIS IN NORWAY AND WERE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION IN SWEDEN AND FINLAND. HE WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SOVIETS TRIED TO DO THIS IN ITALY. ALL THAT BEING SAID, HOWEVER, THE EVOLUTION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY WAS A LONG RUN MATTER, AND HE COULD APPRECIATE THAT THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM WAS TO TRY TO GIVE DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN ITALY A

CHANCE TO MOBILIZE AND REVITALIZE THEMSELVES FOR THE NEXT ELECTIONS. HE WOULD SPEAK TO DE MARTINO IN THIS SENSE IN COPENHAGEN.

4. TURNING TO SPAIN, BRANDT SAID THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND OUR POSITION. THE U.S. HAD TO DEAL PRAGMATICALLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE MOMENT, AS IT HAD DONE DURING THE FRANCO PERIOD. HE FULLY AGREED WITH OUR DESIRE TO MINIMIZE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE. FOR THE SOCIALIST LEADER, FELIPE GONZALEZ, WITH WHOM BRANDT WAS IN CONTACT, THE TACTICAL PROBLEM WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. GONZALEZ MAINTAINED THAT IF THE COMMUNIST PARTY WERE BANNED, HE TOO WOULD HAVE TO REFUSE TO COOPERATE OR TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY ELECTIONS. HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO LEAVE THE COMMUNISTS ALONE IN A MARTYR ROLE. THAT WAS A SURE FORMULA FOR LOSING IN THE CONTEST WITH THE COMMUNISTS FOR DOMINANCE OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

5. THE SPD WORKING ASSUMPTION, ACCORDING TO BRANDT, IS THAT IN ANY FREE ELECTIONS IN SPAIN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTIES WOULD WIN ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IF THEY REMAIN COHESIVE; THE SOCIALISTS WOULD GAIN 15 TO 20 PERCENT, AND THE COMMUNISTS ROUGHLY 10 PERCENT. THERE WOULD, OF COURSE, ALSO BE SOME SUPPORT FOR THE EXTREME RIGHT. UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS, HE COULD ENVISAGE A POLITICAL SITUATION DEVELOPING VERY SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC DURING THE IMMEDIATE POST-WORLD-WAR-II-PERIOD, WHEN THE SPD WAS IN THE OPPOSITION BUT GRADUALLY MOVED TOWARDS EVENTUAL PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. ONE THING WAS CERTAIN, BRANDT CONTINUED, AND THAT WAS THE CLEVERNESS OF THE COMMUNIST LEADER, SANTIAGO CARILLO. HE WAS A MASTER OF
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THE QUICK AND APT RESPONSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN ASKED RECENTLY BY A WESTERN CONTACT WHETHER HE WOULD FAVOR EVENTUAL SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, HE SAID THAT AS LONG AS THE SOVIETS WERE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA HE COULD HARDLY OBJECT. BRANDT ADDED THAT HE HAD NEVER MET CARILLO PERSONALLY, BUT THAT KREISKY KNEW HIM WELL.

6. AS TO PORTUGAL, BRANDT AGREED THAT THE SITUATION INDEED LOOKED MUCH BETTER THERE. AS WE WOULD RECALL, HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS. THE SPD HAD HELPED AND WOULD CONTINUE TO HELP SOARES AND THE SOCIALISTS. AS WE HAD POINTED OUT, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS NOW THE MOST CRITICAL AREA, AND THE SPD WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO HELP HERE AS WELL. CONTACTS HAD ALREADY BEEN ARRANGED IN LISBON BETWEEN

THE SOCIALISTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF LEADING GERMAN INDUSTRIAL FIRMS. WHEN SOARES CAME TO THE FRG IN A FEW WEEKS, HE WOULD BE PUT IN CONTACT WITH LEADING GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMY AND IN THE GOVERNMENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOREIGN INVESTMENT. BRANDT SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERN ABOUT SOARES' CALL FOR A CONFERENCE OF SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES. SOARES CLAIMED HE WAS PURSUING THIS PROJECT IN AN EFFORT TO ENCIRCLE CUNHAL WITH THE MORE MODERATE COMMUNIST LEADERS IN OTHER MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES AND THUS BRING PRESSURE ON HIM. AS WE KNEW, MITTERAND HAD COME OUT IN FAVOR OF SUCH A CONFERENCE, BUT THERE WAS SOME OPPOSITION IN OTHER SOCIALIST CIRCLES AND IT MIGHT NEVER TAKE PLACE.

7. IN THIS CONTEXT, BRANDT SAID HE ALSO WANTED TO CONVEY A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN FRANCE. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT MITTERAND WAS BASICALLY ANTI-COMMUNIST. BRANDT HAD BEEN PRESENT AT A RECENT MEETING IN LONDON WITH MITTERAND AND WILSON DURING WHICH THE FRENCH SOCIALIST LEADER HAD EXPRESSED STRONG SENTIMENTS ON THE SUBJECT, BUT HAD ALSO ARGUED THAT TACTICALLY HE REALLY HAD LITTLE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. HE HAD REBUILT A BADLY AILING SOCIALIST PARTY IN FRANCE AND MADE IT INTO A REAL POWER THREATENING TO BECOME STRONGER THAN
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THE COMMUNIST PARTY. HE HOPED TO WIN OVER EVEN MORE COMMUNIST VOTERS, BUT THE ONLY WAY HE COULD DO THIS WAS TO STAY IN COALITION WITH THE COMMUNISTS FOR THE TIME BEING. OTHERWISE, THE DANGER WAS THAT THE SOCIALISTS WOULD ONCE AGAIN CEASE TO BE A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FORCE IN FRANCE.

8. FINALLY BRANDT ADDED, HE THOUGHT THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREECE ALSO MUST BE A MATTER OF SOME CONCERN. THE NATURAL SPD CORRELATIVE GROUP WAS THE CENTER UNION/NEW FORCES TO WHICH ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE WAS BEING GIVEN, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A PAPANDREOU GAIN IN STRENGTH WAS A REAL DANGER. THE CHANCELLOR HAD RETURNED FROM HIS RECENT GREEK VISIT CALLING PAPANDREOU A TWADDLER ("QUATSCHKOPF"), BUT BRANDT WAS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT SCHMIDT HAD UNDERESTIMATED THE MAN'S CAPACITY AS A DEMAGOGUE.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOT FULLY ACCEPT ALL OF OUR JUDGMENTS, BRANDT WILL, I THINK, DO HIS BEST IN COPENHAGEN TO CONVEY OUR VIEWS TO DE MARTINO, SOARES AND

OTHERS, AND SUPPORT THEM TO THE EXTENT THAT HE CAN. HE IS OBVIOUSLY ENJOYING HIS ROLE AS A DOMINANT FIGURE IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CIRCLES, AND THE SPD CAPACITY TO PROVIDE BOTH MONEY AND ADVICE BASED ON SUCCESS, ADDED TO HIS PERSONAL STATURE, UNDOUBTEDLY GIVES HIM CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE. WE AGREED TO GET TOGETHER AGAIN ON HIS RETURN FROM DENMARK.
HILLENBRAND UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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